

## VEDANTA

Vedanta is India's oldest school of philosophy. Literal Meaning – “**End of the Vedas**” = “**Veda**” (knowledge) and “**anta**” (end). it means Vedanta refers to the “**conclusion**” (anta) of the Vedas, “the end of knowledge” or “ultimate knowledge.” It is also called **Uttara Mīmāṃsā**, which means “higher inquiry” (Vedanta) and “earlier inquiry” (Mimamsa); and is often contrasted with Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the ‘former enquiry’ or ‘primary enquiry’. Vedanta stresses meditation, self-control, and spiritual connection. It captures the core ideas of the Upanishads. Vedanta is concerned with jnanakanda or **knowledge section of the Vedas which is called Upanishads**.

The Upanishads may be regarded as the end of Vedas in different senses –

These were the **last literary products of the Vedic period**.

These mark the **conclusion of Vedic thought**.

These were **taught and debated last, in the Brahmcharya stage**.

Vedanta is based on the **Upanishads**, alongside the **Brahma Sutras** and the **Bhagavad Gita**—collectively known as *Prasthanatrayi* (three foundational texts).

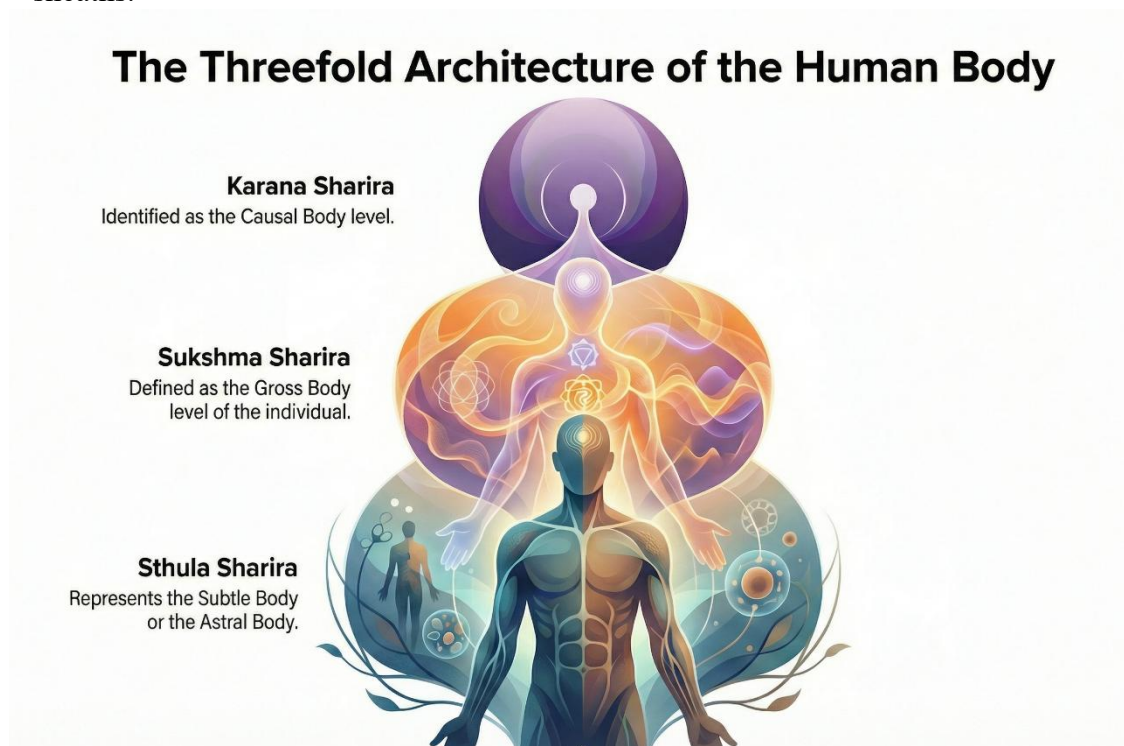
At its heart, Vedanta teaches that every person has a soul (Atman). Our bodies are separate, but all souls are actually one—they merge into the supreme universal soul (Brahman). This idea of all souls being united (not separate) is called **Advaita Vedanta**, or non-dualism (also known as monism), and it's the key to Vedanta.

- The central aim of Vedanta is **moksha (liberation)**—freedom from the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*).
- Ignorance (*avidya*) is considered the root cause of human suffering. Due to ignorance, the individual mistakes the body and mind for the true Self.
- True knowledge (*jnana*) removes ignorance and reveals the identity of **Atman with Brahman**.
- Vedanta holds that the material world is **impermanent**. In Advaita Vedanta, the world is described as *mithya*—neither absolutely real nor totally unreal.

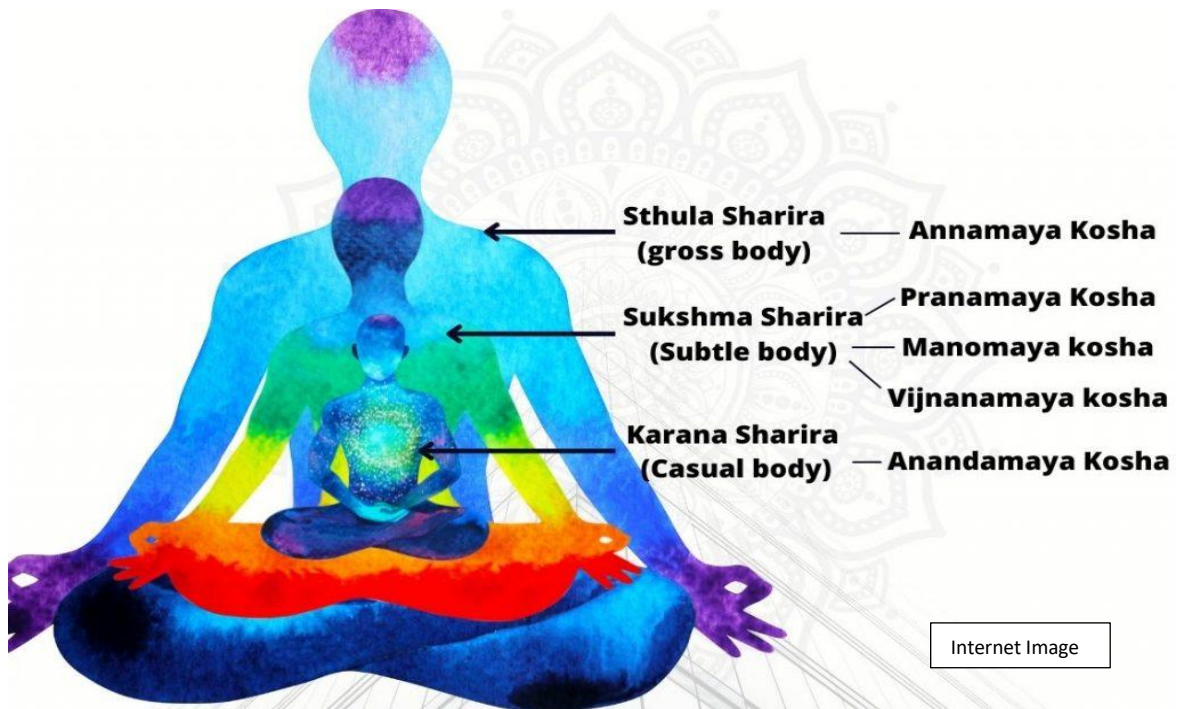
- Ethical living (*dharma*), self-discipline, and purity of mind are necessary preparations for higher knowledge.
- Vedanta recognizes **three states of experience**—waking (*jagrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), and deep sleep (*sushupti*)—and points to a fourth state (*turiya*), which is pure consciousness.
- Meditation, reflection, and guidance from a **guru** are essential means to realize the truth.
- Ultimately, Vedanta teaches that **realization**, not ritual alone, leads to liberation.

### *Salient Features of the Vedanta Philosophy*

- ✧ *Jiva or individual soul and the universal soul (Brahman) is the only real/ true reality.* But when an individual identifies himself with the body, mind and the senses, then he gets deluded by Avidya or ignorance. In reality, it is not different from Brahman or the Absolute.
- ✧ *Only God or Brahman is true and nothing else*
- ✧ *The visible Physical world is an illusion and unreal.* It is just a Maya/delusion.
- ✧ **Levels of Body-** All individuals have three levels of body:
  1. **Sukshma Sharira** -Gross Body
  2. **Sthula Sharira** -Subtle Body or Astral Body
  3. **Karana Sharira**- Causal body.
- ✧ In the Body Sheaths' classification, the Jiva is divided into 5 (Panchakosh) layers or 5 sheaths.



1. **The Gross Body/sthula sharira** is called Annamaya Kosha or the Food Sheath.  
We can also call it the Physical Sheath.



2. The Subtle/astral/ Sukshma sharira is divided into the following sheaths
  - Pranamaya Kosha (or the Vital Air / life force Sheath)
  - Manomaya Kosha (or the Mind/ mana Sheath)
  - Vijnanamaya Kosha (or the Intellect Sheath)
3. **The causal body/ Karana Sharir** is called **Anandamaya Kosha** or the **bliss sheath**.

So overall, it has the 3 sharira and the 5 Panchkosha classification.

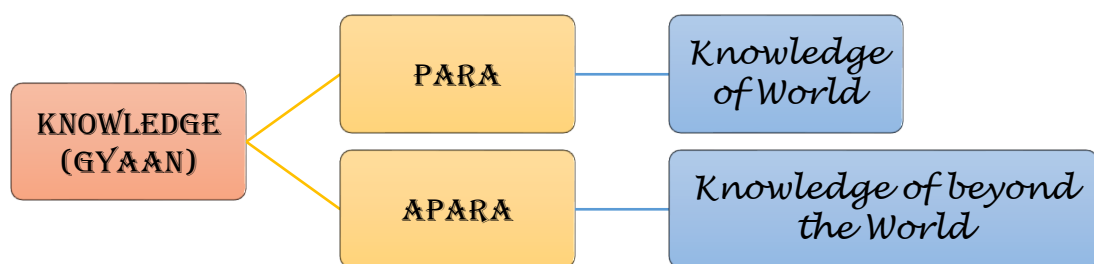
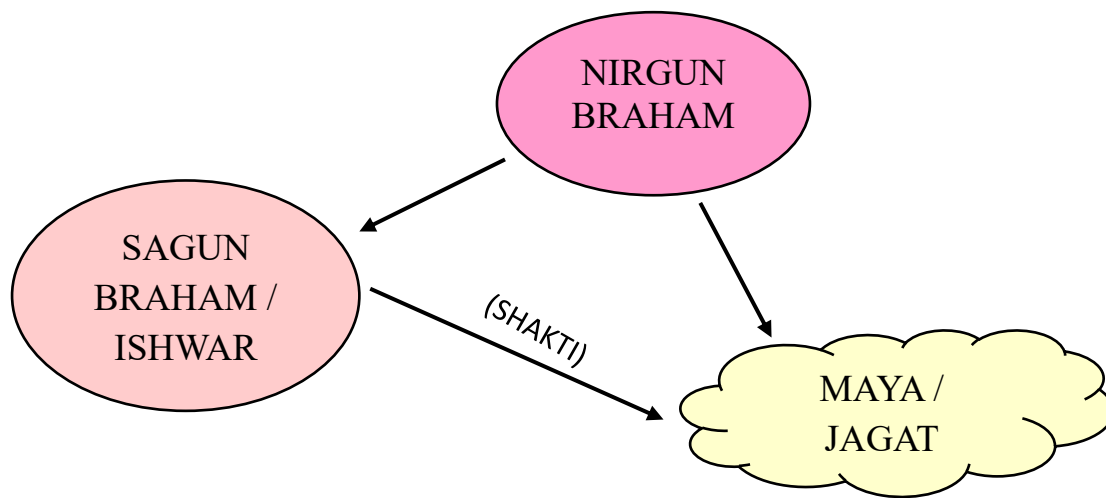
☞ The *moment this illusion of Maya is removed, an individual achieves liberation* or salvation and gets free from all bondages.

☞

## METAPHYSICS

Vedanta philosophies discuss three fundamental metaphysical categories and the relations between the three.

1. **Brahman or Īśvara:** the ultimate reality
2. **Ātman or Jivātman:** the individual soul, self
3. **Prakriti or Jagat:** the empirical world, ever-changing physical universe, body and matter.



## EPISTEMOLOGY:

**There are six pramanas in the Vedanta philosophy**

- i. *Pratyaksha* (Perception),
- ii. *Anumana* (inference),
- iii. *Upamana* (analogy / comparison ),
- iv. *Shabda* (verbal/ scriptural testimony),
- v. *Arthapatti* (derivation of meaning) and
- vi. *Anuplabdhi* (absence of something) there is no physical proof available for verification i.e. Brahm Gyaan

**Vedanta school of Philosophy is further divided into six sub-schools:**

1. **Advaita (by Adi Shankara)** – Believes that both the individual self (Atman) and Brahman are the same, and knowing this results in liberation/mukti
2. **Visishtadvaita (by Ramanuja)** – Believes that jeevatman is part of Brahman and hence are similar
3. **Dvaita (by Madhvacharya)** – Believes that Brahman and Atman two different entities
4. **Dvaitadvaita (by Nimbarka)** – It asserts that Brahman is the controller and hence is highest/supreme most reality
5. **Shuddhadvaita (by Vallabhacharya)** – Believes that both go and individual are same.
6. **Achintya Bheda Abedha (by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)** – It states than individual self (jivatman) is both different and similar to Brahman.

## **THEORIES OF CAUSATION IN VEDĀNTA**

### **1. Satkāryavāda (Doctrine of Pre-existent Effect)**

**Meaning:** Sat = Existent, Kārya = Effect

**“The effect pre-exists in the cause in an unmanifest form.”**

**Accepted by:** Vedānta (all schools), Sāṃkhya

**Example:** Pot exists potentially in clay.

**Arguments:**

1. Asadakaraṇāt – Non-being cannot produce being
2. Upādānagrahaṇāt – Effect needs a material cause
3. Sarvasambhavābhāvāt – Anything cannot come from anything
4. Śaktasya śakya-karaṇāt – Only a capable cause produces an effect
5. Kāraṇa-bhāvāt – Effect is of the nature of the cause

### **2. Asatkāryavāda (Opposite View)**

**Meaning:** **“Effect does not exist prior to its production.”**

**Accepted by:** Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika.

Effect is a new creation.

### 3. Vivartavāda (Apparent Causation)

**School:** Advaita Vedānta (Śaṅkara)

**Meaning:** “Effect is an apparent modification of the cause.”

No real change in Brahman.

**Example:** Rope–snake illusion.

**Reality:**

Cause (Brahman) – Paramārthika satya

Effect (World) – Vyāvahārika satya

### 4. Pariṇāmavāda (Real Transformation)

**School:** Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta (Rāmānuja)

**Meaning:** “Effect is a real transformation of the cause.”

Brahman truly becomes the world without losing essence.

**Example:** Milk → Curd

### 5. Ārambhavāda (Creation Theory)

**School:** Dvaita Vedānta (Madhva), Nyāya

**Meaning:** “Effect is newly produced.”

Cause and effect are eternally different.

## VEDĀNTA AND EDUCATION

### AIMS OF EDUCATION

- Education must aim at *physical, mental and moral development* of the individual.  
Education must develop a *healthy body in a healthy mind*
- Focuses on the *overall development* of the child. *Religious values are the centre of education.*
- Believes in Pursuit of culture.
- Civilization must be inculcated.
- Focus on both main aspects of human life, i.e. *practical and spiritual*

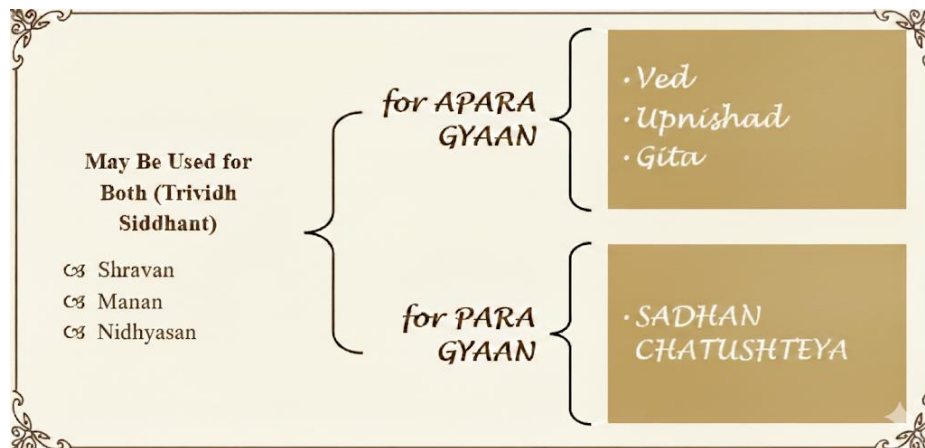
According to Vedānta, ‘*chitta vrtti nirodha*’ is another important aim of Education, it implies *control and balance of mind*, thereby *reducing stress, improving mental health* and increasing *Self-awareness*

*Must lead towards true knowledge about Brahman as well as about one’s true self.*

## CURRICULUM

Curriculum according to Vedanta must include subjects of two categories:

1. **Para-vidya or (spiritual learning)**- Includes study of four Vedas besides vedangas, Upanishads, Puranas, vakovakya (logic), Ekayana (ethics), Devavidya (etymology), Brahmaavidya etc.
2. **Apara-vidya or (worldly learning)**- Includes subjects such as Ayurveda, History, Mathematics, Economics, Science, physiology, rashi (science of numbers) etc.



## Four Prerequisite Disciplines



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## METHODS OF TEACHING

Advocated two main methods of Teaching:

- 🌈 **Maukhik** (oral method)- students were supposed to memorize and chant the mantras or the Vedic hymns.
- 🌈 **Chintan** (method of thinking or reflection).



Three main stages of understanding:

***Shravan (Hearing),***

***Manan (Meditation) and***

***Nidhi-dhyasan (Realization/ self-experience)***

Other methods such as *Question-Answer*, *self-study* and *illustration* were also used.

### **ROLE OF TEACHER AND STUDENT**

- ☞ The teacher or *Guru* was regarded as both a **spiritual guide and an educational parent**. He was responsible for the holistic development of the *shishya* (student).
- ☞ The Guru occupied a position of **supreme respect and authority** and was entrusted with shaping the student's character, intellect, and moral values.
- ☞ A teacher was given main importance; he was expected to *prepare the student for practical life and to make him ready for the practical life ahead*
- ☞ Students were required to show **reverence, obedience, and gratitude** towards the teacher and strictly follow the prescribed rules of the *Gurukula* system.
- ☞ **Self-discipline, humility, and devotion to learning** were considered essential qualities of a student.
- ☞ To follow **Brahmacharya (celibacy)** was compulsory during the period of formal education,
- ☞ *Students* were expected to *respect the teacher, study, follow rules and adhere to self-discipline*

### **DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOL**

There used to be Naturalistic setting of school premises. Vedantic education laid down strict rules of discipline for students as well as for teachers and wanted them to strictly adhere to such rules. Self-discipline of body and mind considered very important.